



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY February 21 & BEYOND

Diversity Is Not Divisiveness



In Chapter 9 of the Book of Genesis there is a story about God's covenant with Noah, his sons, and every living creature that has survived the flood. This covenant is meant to last till the end of times on our planet. It is a covenant of preservation—preservation of God's

wonderful diverse creation, including humankind. The symbol for this covenant is the beautiful multicolored rainbow in the sky.

Creation itself is based on diversity. Scientists now know that all that exists has derived from one primordial undifferentiated source which, through a gradual process of diversification has produced our multivariate universe and eventually, our wonderful planet with its teeming diversity of life forms. They also now recognize the undeniable interconnection that exists in all created forms, living or not living, and there is a trend in the scientific world to acknowledge that there seems to be a purpose permeating all the universe, which manifests in the emergence and preservation of life.

The rainbow is the result of the breaking up of the sun's light into its diverse components. The white light comprises all these beautiful colors that we see when the rain drops suspended in the sky act as the agents that make this diversification possible. We have all been amazed at its beauty, particularly when the colors are intense, and the rainbow is a complete semicircle. Sometimes we have even been blessed by the appearance of a double rainbow in the sky.

The diversity of creation and its life forms never ceases to delight us. Humankind is also multivariate. But diversity itself can create the illusion of separateness.

When we make the white light go through a prism, we obtain the full spectrum of colors of the rainbow. But placing an inverted prism on the other side will make these separate colors recombine into the white light again. The lesson we should learn from this well-known experiment is that no matter how diverse creation is, the essential unity is always there.

For us Christians, the essential source and origin of all that exists is God. We humans and all that exists in the universe have our origin in our loving Father, and that is an essential truth we should never forget.

God created each of us humans in his likeness and image, which includes the free power of being creative, and an essential individuality that makes each of us unique. So great is this free power, that it enables us to deny our common source and act as if we were totally separate entities, with egotistic intents that make us believe we are the center of the universe and that everything and everyone else is subordinated to our interests. This is no longer diversity but divisiveness. Such divisiveness has been and still is the main cause of the evil in this world.

In the long run, the individuals that fall prey to this illusion, and those who let themselves be led by such "leaders" end up being the unhappiest persons on earth, and suffer the real death we should all fear, that of being separated from the unifying source of life, the Creator Himself.

Our Creator has deliberately made us free, not with the intent to make us fail and confuse diversity with divisiveness, but to make us responsibly choose and make the right decisions. This is known as temptation. Without it there is no real spiritual growth and maturity. When we are not faced with the need to distinguish between the right perception of our unique nature and the danger of believing that we are

separate from the rest, we cannot grow as humans, and we are a poor reflection of the divine. Every time we come out victors in this choice, we grow closer in reflecting our Creator's nature, which is essentially our own.

Jesus is given an assurance of His divine affiliation and God's love for Him in His Baptism at the Jordan River. He certainly needs this reassuring statement and the power of the Spirit for the special salvific mission God has entrusted Him with. But He also needs the growth and maturity that can only be attained by the inner meditation on His nature and purpose. His unique individuality as a human being that incarnates the Creator's image in such a perfect way also gives Him unusual possibilities that may be tempting indeed. What if He chooses to follow His own way for the purposes that He considers best for Himself?

But no, He chose rightly. The tempter was utterly defeated. He was surrounded by the diverse creation in the wilderness, including the beasts. Diversity reminded Him of our essential unity in God, and God's messengers, the angels, who always heed the ones who follow God's plans, who served Him.

Lent is a season for spiritual disciplines, aiming to spiritual growth. May we also be tempted by our uniqueness in the diversity of creation, so that by consciously choosing to be faithful to the essential unity, we defeat the notions of divisiveness that separate us from one another, from the rest of creation, from ourselves and from our God.

Fr. Carlos E. Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17 Psalm 25:3-9 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-13

CALENDAR

Note: Each Sunday we will have a Zoom meeting for our Sunday Mass whether it is held in the courtyard or the church. If the service is held in the church because of inclement weather, parishioners may be present. **The service time has been moved to 10am for a warmer environment in the courtyard each Sunday.**

SUNDAY The First Sunday in Lent
10:00am Mass (See note above)
Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org
Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

TUESDAY Noon Mass in All Saints' courtyard

WEDNESDAY Lenten Disciplines offered by Father Mark Michael through *Living Church* Visit our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org to learn more and register

FRIDAY Stations of the Cross in the courtyard at Noon

SUNDAY The Second Sunday in Lent
10:00am Mass (See note above)
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